

An unexpected companion

by MissSharpenedSpikes

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Friendship, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Astrid, Hiccup, OC

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-06-26 19:43:29

Updated: 2014-12-27 17:04:13

Packaged: 2016-04-26 18:24:40

Rating: T

Chapters: 10

Words: 18,552

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Set during the first movie. What if Hiccup found the one friend he never had, someone to support him during the dragon training? Let's shake things up a bit, shall we? Retelling of the story from different points of view, with new characters and strange turns of events. First HTTYD fic, so please be kind. Reviews highly appreciated. Contains some Hurt. Rated T because I'm paranoid.

1. Prologue

****This one is just a short, to introduce the new character (well, you won't get much information about who it is, but you'll at least know how Hiccup found her)****

* * *

><p>It was raining. It was raining very heavily. Practically pouring. The wind was howling through the forest. A thin figure laid on the ground, the will to live long-lost, clothes soaking wet, as well as hair, eyes closed. Hand holding onto a dark leather cape.<p>

The storm was too strong. No one would be mad enough to go out in this.

Good. They'll stay away. They'll leave you alone.
To...

...die.

Cursed, hunted, feared, hated. Left alone. Thrown away. Destined to suffer, regret all the mistakes. Silently freezing. Starving. Crying in pain.

Forever

A lightning struck and filled the dark forest with bright light, soon followed by a loud thunder. A tree caught on fire.

The figure moved. Eyes slowly opened, thin arms stretching to support the weight of a too light body. Staring into the fire, motionless. Tears dripped from dark grey eyes. Not bothering to wipe them off, the being looked up, staring into the sky, looking for a rescue, an escape, an explanation. As if asking the sky, lips parted, to breath out a light whisper.

"Why?"

Why, really. Just because someone needed amusement? Just because she couldn't stand she was prepared to do something she didn't like? Because of her stupid family? Her stupid tribe? All of the stupid vikings who couldn't recognize her? Tell her apart from the others? Feel she is different? Everyone knew it. Everyone knew she was weird, strange. But was it enough for them to leave her be? NO! They had to try. They had to help her. But they were all the same. Everyone hated her in the end. Once they sense the danger, they destroy it._

Sure, destroy her. She would be fine with it, if they wouldn't pay for it later. Everywhere she went, she brought destruction. Death._

Muscles failed, eyelids slid shut, a groan escaped from the cracked lips and body fell once again to the cold ground. Head hit a sharp rock, sending an icy feeling into the temples.

It would be nice to just die. But when you are cursed by a vicious beats, it's not really that simple. Let's hope no one's going to find her._

And the whole world went blank.

* * *

><p>I am pretty sure no chapters are going to be that... mysterious? I don't know if that's the right word...

****Anyway, review if you liked it. Tommorrow, I'm going to post the second chapter!****

2. Chapter 2

****I wanted to wait a little, to make you wait, but - oh well! :) I couldn't wait. I want to know what you think about it.
:D****

****Anyway, here's the story. Enjoy! ****

* * *

><p>Lost in thought, Hiccup didn't even notice the dark clouds forming in the sky. Slowly walking towards the village, he had to think about the Night Fury back in the cove. He wouldn't even notice it was raining if he wouldn't slip on a wet log. He gasped, waving his arms around to gain his lost balance. "Oh, great," he murmured

once he saw the clouds. He ran his fingers through his hair and noticed it was completely wet. His clothing wasn't much better either. So he sped up.<p>

Fallen trees, sharp branches and slippery rocks suddenly appeared out of nowhere, slowing him down. Soon, he felt quite a few scratches on his palms. He slowed down, knowing it would save him a lot injuries. Besides, no one in the village would miss him.

Suddenly, he tripped over a log and fell on the cold ground, landing in a pool of icy cold water, making a low splashing sound, successfully soaking all his clothes in the process. He was standing up again, when he heard a painful groan. He turned to the source of the sound and gasped. He didn't trip over a log. It was a human body.

He leaned closer, examing it. The person was lying on his side, long messy black hair all over his - or rather _her_ - face and the wet ground, her clothes (leather cloak, long grey tunic, dark pants and leather boots) wet through and through, skin pale. He crouched next to the body and gently rolled it over. It was ice-cold. He pressed his ear on the chest, listening. He sighed in relief when he heard the low sound of a weak heartbeat, as well as felt the chest slowly raising and falling. He pulled the hair from the face and his eyes widened. The girl was in a really bad condition. She had big bags and dark circles under her eyes. Her cheek bones were much more visible than they should be, her lips purple. And still, she was alive.

Suddenly, her eyelids fluttered open, to reveal dark grey orbs staring up at him. There was so much emotion in them. Hurt, fear, hatred and hostility. Her lips parted. If he wasn't so close, he won't hear her low growl:

"_Don't_..."

She shivered. "Don't help me." The last sentence came out as a desperate whisper. As if she knew he wasn't convinced, she added: "Please... Leave me be."

He frowned. A girl freezing in the woods was pleading him not to help her. That was disconcerting.

Her eyes slid shut. "..._Please_"

He heard a loud thunder. He couldn't leave her here. She'll die for sure.

And he won't be a murderer.

Luckily, he wasn't carrying anything today, so his hands weren't full. He scooped her up in his arms, and his eyes widened. She was light. So light he could carry her with ease. _Too light._

All the way back to the village, he was extremely careful not to drop her. He was also scared he won't get home in time. Before he got there, the decision was made. He'll take her to his house and take care of her, no matter what.

* * *

><p>The rain was drumming on the roof and the wind howling in the chimney. The characteristic crackling sound of burning wood filled the room. Pleasant warmth surrounded her.<p>

Nice dream.

A content moan escaped her lips. She turned around and bundled up in the thick covers.

Her eyes shot open and she quickly sat up. The girl groaned as her vision blurred and she collapsed back on the bed. When the dizziness faded away, she sat up again, very slowly this time. Looking around, her eyes examined the surroundings.

From the decorations and furniture around she could tell this was definitely a viking house. A rather large one, probably Chief's. _That was strange. Why would the boy take her to the Chief instead of the Healer?_

She was in a large bed, bundled up in feather covers and most likely all the hides in the whole house. Her hair was dry, she noticed, as well as her clothes. Examining them she found out someone changed her. She was wearing only a small leaf green tunic she won't fit in if she wasn't so thin. Looking for her clothes she saw them laid next to the fireplace to dry. A kettle was hung above the fire, a boiling liquid inside. She sniffed and smelt a herbal sent, probably tea.

Even if the room was pleasantly warm, there was still a remaining icy feeling in her fingers.

She knew she should go away. Disappear. Leave. It would be best for all of them. But when you almost freeze to death and someone takes you to a warm house, gives you warm clothes and puts you into a warm bed, making hot tea for you, it's hard to leave. And she was pretty selfish.

Well, he dragged me all the way here and taken care of me. It would be rude to just walk away, right? If something goes wrong, you can always run. Let's give it a try.

She wasn't someone to decline offered comfort.

* * *

><p>After he visited Gothi, the old healer, to ask for some herbs, Hiccup ran back home to prepare some tea for the mysterious girl. He was sure she'll be sick after all she went through. Too bad they didn't have anything to cook at home. The food for the entire village was served in the Great Hall, since Stoick and all the warriors left to find the Nest and not much vikings stayed on the island. So Hiccup grabbed a satchel and went there.<p>

Of course, all the teens were there with Gobber. He would just take the food and disappear like he was never there, but at the sound of his name he started paying attention.

"What did Hiccup do wrong?"

Nice question, Gobber.

"He showed up?" asked Ruffnut.

"He didn't get eaten?" guessed Tuffnut.

"He's never where he should be," stated Astrid.

You know, Astrid, I was busy saving strange girls in the woods, sorry I came late.

"Thank you, Astrid!" Gobber exclaimed.

The blacksmith then showed them all the Book of dragons, adding they should all read it. Looks like the only one interested in it was Fishlegs, who read it quite a few times. When they all ran away to "kill dragons" Hiccup was left alone with the book. It was really tempting to just sit and read it right at the spot. However, he had a girl to feed, so he just took the book with him and went home. Sure, they won't mind if he borrowed it.

* * *

><p>Soo, what do you think? Tell me in your review! (please, it makes my day :))

The next chapter will be here next week, I updated in a day so you could read more and decide if you like it or not and the first chapter was pretty short (it was supposed to be short!) and it didn't give you much information. I wanted to make it up for those who don't like short.

Hope you like it. What else? Hmm... nice day, I guess?

**Oh, and if you have any suggestions about the plot, don't hesitate and PM me. **

3. Chapter 3

Ok, I know I said I'll update next week, but... I just managed to write this really soon, so just be grateful & read.

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>The covers were quite comforting, offering the sweet warm sensation she missed for so long. She would've slept much longer, if someone wouldn't shake her shoulders. The shake was gentle, but it was enough to wake her up and that was the last thing she wanted right now. She promised herself she'll kill the daring one who disturbed her slumber.<p>

Her eyes opened and blinked. She saw no one. Sitting up, she eyed the room, to find the boy from the forest sitting at the fireplace. She cleared her throat. Loudly.

He turned around and examined her for a moment, then pointed at the bedside table. "There are some dry clothes. Put them on," he said. Pointing at a dining table, he added: "I brought you some food. I bet

you're hungry." He then turned to watch the fire again, his back turned to her.

Well, at least he won't look while I'm dressing.

She got out of the bed. Wearing only the tunic, she shivered a little. She looked at the bedside table and sure, there were folded dark brown pants, light brown furry jacket and on the floor, next to the bed, was a pair of old boots. Not much her style, but they should do the trick. She put the pants and boots on, letting the jacket be. It was warm enough in the room.

She sat at the table and eyed her meal suspiciously. It was roasted chicken legs. Ok, she was starving, but after so long time without food, she felt sick only thinking about eating. She sniffed at the meal. A delicious smell of meat filled her nose and her stomach growled. Well, she should try it. Picking up one leg, she took a small, hesitant bite. The fantastic taste exploded in her mouth and she quickly gulped. She took bigger bite and chewed the delicious chicken. There was nothing she would rather do than eat more. For her, it was the best, most amazing meal on Earth.

"You should slow down a little, you know, unless you want a stomach ache."

She gulped and looked up from her diner. The boy looked truly concerned for her. She didn't know what to say, so she put down the nibbled chicken leg and put aside the plate.

"I didn't ask for your help," she scowled.

"And here I was hoping you would at least say thank you."

"There's no point in thanking for something you reject."

"You don't look like rejecting."

She sighed. He was right. It was nice, finally having a warm place to sleep and something to eat. "Fine - thanks. Happy?" He simply smiled back. When he once again turned to the fire, she brought the plate closer to take some more bites. She was still pretty hungry. Even if he was right - she shouldn't eat so quickly - she was weak, thin and her stomach was killing her. Not to mention the fantastic taste!

* * *

><p>When he got back home, she was still sleeping. Hiccup took the kettle from the fire and put the chicken legs there instead, so they could heat up a little. Outside was almost freezing and on the way back the meat went cold. He poured himself some tea into a mug. Sipping on it, he slowly approached the bed. The girl slept soundly. She looked much better - her skin colour was back to normal. He didn't want to wake her up, but she was so thin. Apparently she didn't eat for a long time. She looked even thinner, because she was tall.<p>

He shook her shoulders a little. She made a low grumble and moved under the covers. He decided to check if her clothes were dry or not. They were better, but still wet. Before there wasn't much time for him to study her clothes, but now he noticed the leather of the cloak

and boots was a lot different from anything he's ever seen. He took the chicken from the fire and put it back on a plate, placing it on the diner table. He went to examine the clothes more, but before he had the chance, the girl cleared her throat.

He turned around, taking in her looks. Her eyes seemed a little brighter, now bluish gray colour. She looked horrible, the dark circles under her eyes even more visible in the light of fire. She looked bad, really bad, but it seemed better. At least she wasn't cold. He pointed to the clothes he prepared for her and her meal on the table. Then he turned his back to her so she could have a little privacy, ignoring the fact that he already saw her when he was taking of her wet clothes. After he heard her sit at the table, he turned to her again and watched her take first hesitant bite and then attempting to swallow the chicken leg whole (at least it looked like that).

"You should slow down, you know, if you don't want a stomach ache," he informed her.

She scowled, looking him up and down, eventually putting the plate aside. "I didn't ask for your help," she replied looking away. It came out almost like a growl.

"And here I was hoping you would at least say thank you," he commented dryly.

"There is no point in thanking for something you reject."

"You don't look like rejecting."

First in the forest and now again. Why is she so distant? Anyone else would scream "Help me! Help me!" until he saved them. Yet, she almost forbided him to even try it. And now, warm, rested, in front of hot meal, she looked actually happy for a moment. But still, she refused to thank him. Why? She must know it's rude. She didn't ask for his help, true. She should be thankful though. There was something wrong about it. She knew he could kick her out. Did she actually wish to die?

She seemed to think about it for a moment. Her gaze rested on him, then flicked to the chicken. Her shoulders slumped and she gave a sigh. "Fine - thanks. Happy?"

Simply smiling back, Hiccup watched her start eating again. When her attention was back on the food, he looked once more on the cloak. That was another mystery. What was it made of? It was dark blue cape, black on the inside, with a hood. Cautiously he reached out and ran his fingers over the strange material. On the inside, it was smooth and soft, but on the outside, it was hard, coarse and a little... _glossy? _He took the piece of clothing and placed it in his lap. His fingers ran over it, taking in how beautiful it looked. He liked it. The surface of the material was divided into random circular shapes, which stood out a little. They looked almost like...

Scales?

"You didn't ask for a permission." The girl suddenly appeared right behind him. "That's rude."

Startled, he jumped and the beautiful cloth ended in the fire. He tried to grab it before the fire could do any damage, but the flames covered the whole thing and he couldn't take it out without getting a burn. "I- I'm sorry, really, I didn't mean to-" the girl cut him off when she wet her hand in the kettle with the tea, grabbed for her cloak and took it out. Hiccup gasped seeing it completely undamaged.

Noticing his startled expression, she simply said: "Fireproof."

She examined it, as well as the rest of her clothes. She then threw the cloak on her shoulders, fastening it with a clasp made of what looked like three fangs. When he send her a questioning look she simply raised an eyebrow, daring him to question her actions.

"You like it on? Fine!" he chuckled nervously. Quickly standing up, to put some distance between the two of them, he said more for himself than for her, "Guess you won't need that one," meaning the jacket he prepared for her.

Even in her weak state, her stare could cut holes in your back. Damn, that girl was creepy!_

"Ooor, maybe I should just leave it here, heh, if you needed more clothes." He tried his best to avoid her gaze, he was pretty uncomfortable, feeling those eyes on him. "I should go to sleep now, I have dragon training tomorrow.." he told her. The boy urged himself to make an eye contact and added: "You should go to bed too, in your condition and all."

She remained silent, simply looking him straight in the eye. If she wasn't looking at him, he'll think she didn't even hear him.

"You don't talk much, do you?"

Her lips pulled into a small smirk. "I save my words for those who need to hear them the most." And with that, she turned back to the fire.

* * *

><p>She smirked at his reaction. She stood up and walked to the kitchen to find a mug. Then she came back to her bed, took one of the hides and placed it at the fireplace. She poured herself some tea. It wasn't bad. Sitting at the hide near the fire, staring into the flames and sipping her tea, she unconsciously stroked the scaly cape.<p>

After many minutes have passed and many mugs were emptied, that was when she finally fell asleep.

* * *

><p>So, hope you liked it!

I reply to every review, unless you specifically tell me not to reply - and I think you won't. ;D

**Now, review, please and tell me if you liked it or not, what I should improve and so on. And, if you are going to review, please,

tell me what you think about the girl. I am kinda curious...
=)**

4. Chapter 4

Things are going pretty well,aren't they? Update everyday, I don't know how I'm doing it. But, I have to warn you. I had some problems with chapter 5. It won't be as good as the others. I'll have to work on it later, but I guess it won't help. I suck at writing scenes with more than two or three people...

For now, let's forget about it.

** Here's the 4. chapter. Enjoy!**

* * *

><p>On Berk, it was always much colder before sunrise. After the sun peeked around the horizon and it's light touched the island, everything heated up. That was the reason why most of the villagers didn't get up before the sun rised. As the sunlight covered the village, more and more vikings could be seen outside. Hiccup was an exception. He usually got up sooner, before the sun lighted the streets and houses. Getting up early meant not so much disappointed glares, stares and scowls were directed on him. Today, however, he got up early because of someone else. He still had nothing at home to make breakfast, so he'll have to take the girl to great hall. He had a feeling she would rather go with him, so she could stretch her legs a little. She was in a bad state, but she acted like it wasn't a big deal - of course she'll want to go outside. And something was telling him she shouldn't be seen.

Once he got out of bed, he washed his face, splashing it with ice-cold water to wake up completely, he got dressed, ran his fingers through his hair and went downstairs.

He was surprised when she wasn't in the bed. No, he found her in the same position as he left her, at the fireplace, sitting on a bear hide. The little tea that remained in the kettle was cold by now as the fire burned out, leaving only a few glowing carbons. The girl was wrapped up in her cloak, her hood on. And she was sleeping soundly.

He made a mental note to ask her what's her name. He didn't like thinking about her as "the girl". Not to mention how he's going to call her in front of others. "Hey you!" didn't seem right.

He shook her shoulders, just like he did the day before. He emptied the kettle on the glowing fire remains, succesfully putting them out. When he turned back to the girl, she was staring up at him, cursing him silently for waking her up. "I heard the sick ones need rest," she said, her voice sounding completely normal, not like someone's who just woken up. It was calm, yet threatening, making him slightly uncomfortable and even regreting waking her up for a moment, before he reminded himself he had enough of a reason to do it.

She looked better. Her eyes looked brighter and even more blue than before. The bags under her eyes looked much smaller, although the dark circles remained. Her skin color was still pretty unhealthy. Her

recovery will take some time, he guessed.

"You need to eat," he explained. "We must go to the Great hall for breakfast, I don't have anything in here."

She nodded, not commenting his lack of groceries and took of her cloak. When she kicked off his old boots and started to take off the pants as well, he took the hint and turned around. While she dressed, he searched the kitchen, making a mental list of needed things. He had enough herbs, so he didn't need to care about them.

Not hearing any shuffling sounds, he looked back at the girl, now dressed in her clothes, except for the cloak - she had his furry jacket instead. Said cloak was carefully folded on the bed. She looked him straight in the eyes and said in a matter-of-fact voice: "If something happens to Him, I'm not responsible for my actions."

He decided to ignore the fact that she called the cloak "He", or that she said it like she was talking about the weather, yet the words promised wringed necks, broken bones and pretty much anything but trouble. He nodded, grateful that she chose to leave the suspicious garment here, so they won't attract too much attention. Maybe she wasn't so insane after all.

* * *

><p>As they crept through the village, they were silent. Hiccup then remembered his question.<p>

"You know, it'll work much better if I knew your name," he said in a low voice, not wanting anyone else except her to hear him. "So?"

She stopped, just looking at him for while, silent, the wheels in her head spinning. "Call me Nala," she said then.

* * *

><p>In the Great hall, Hiccup sent her to the darkest corner and went to grab breakfast for them. The place was empty, except for a few drunk vikings, all of them sleeping. Once sat at their table, opposite Nala, he set the plates on the wooden desk. The hungry girl eyed her meal (bread with butter and goat cheese) just like she did the previous day, then started eating. He followed suit and took a few bites as well. After a while of silent chewing, he was forced to voice his thoughts. He had so many questions!<p>

"So, _Nala, _can I ask you what were you doing in the forest yesterday?"

She looked up from her breakfast, swallowed and replied calmly. "I don't give personal informations to complete strangers."

"But I saved you," he tried.

"I met you not even 24 hours ago, I don't know your name, age, nor social status. I don't know where I am, why you took me here, ignoring my warnings completely and I am _wondering, _what were you doing in the forest, so far from the village, so late, _in the rain..."_

That was it, he's been caught. How to respond to that? She had a cloak that was made of what looked pretty much like dragon hide. S_he was probably a dragon killer. Maybe a really successfull one even. To get a hide like that one in one piece, she had to be good. Very good. He couldn't tell her about the Night Fury. She'll go and kill it for sure. Then make some clothes out of it..._

"I'm not stupid, you know." Her voice stopped his train of thoughts. "I know how far I was from the village."

Seeing him completely lost, she ended his misery. "Le't make a deal. You won't ask what I was doing there and I won't ask you."

Hiccup let out a sigh of relief. "Agreed."

After a moment of silence, he spoke up again.

"But I am not a stranger."

She gave him a look.

"Well, not a _complete _stranger."

Up went an eyebrow.

"Ok, fine. You asked for it!" He prepared himself for the inevitable and started. "My name's Hiccup-"

A small smirk appeared on her face.

"-I'm 15-"

A You-got-to-be-kidding-me look.

"-my father is Stoick the Vast, chief of tbe tribe."

That earned him a pitifull smile.

Surprised that she didn't laugh at him, Hiccup continued. "This island is Berk, home of the Hooligan tribe. I took you here, because I knew you would die there."

Pause.

"And I don't want you to die."

Silence followed.

"That brings me to another question, why didn't you wanted me to help you?" he asked his biggest question.

"I thought we agreed not to talk about it."

"But I thought tha-"

"Never."

The tone in which she said that made it clear that pushing even a little more would earn him a serious injury, so he shut his mouth and

let it be.

_Talking to her was similar to talking to Astrid, he realised. There was just the difference that he spoke with Nala much more often and she was actually paying attention, unlike Astrid. Plus, Nala was a lot scarier, since he didn't know what she was capable of. And sometimes, she was just making fun of him and that was something Astrid would never, _ever, _do. Oh - and he didn't have a crush on Nala. Actually, when he was thinking about it, the two of them had just one in common - piss them off and you won't survive the night._

* * *

><p>Soooo, what you think about it? Review and tell me! Reviews make my day! :) And if you like my story, please consider clicking at the favfollow button, it makes me happy. =D**

5. Chapter 5

So, here we are again! I had to completely rewrite this chapter, it really took me some time, but I got it! I don't know why, but I want to update everyday just because I can. xD

But, I am getting a little angry with you guys. :(I know there is a lot of people reading this, I checked. Traffic stats, guys, traffic stats. So, you have any excuse for not reviewing? You can do it even without account, you know. So, final word - _If I won't find there at least 10 reviews, I am officially angry with you and I won't update tomorrow!_

Dear maggi was wondering who will find Hiccup and Nala in the Great hall. Well, Maggi, here you go!

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>She wasn't someone to eavesdrop. She usually didn't even care what others did, a long as they didn't bother her. No, she always cared about herself and her problems.<p>

That officially changed this morning.

All she wanted to do was get up early to go jogging before the dragon training, as usual. She would wake up, get dressed, have breakfast at the Great hall and head to the forest, where she always went. But for once, something happened.

When she saw Hiccup, she wasn't surprised. He was used to getting up sooner, she knew. Although she always did her best to avoid him, some days she was just so unfortunate and met him.

So what she did was sit at the table on the exact opposite side of the Hall and mind her own business. That was, until voices carried around the large room to her ears. A conversation could be heard. Still minding her own business, she tried to ignore it. She failed once she recognised Hiccup's voice. He rarely talked. She didn't see anyone else in the Hall, but it didn't seem right for him to talk to

himself. And then she heard a second voice. She couldn't tell who it was. It was a girl, that she knew for sure, and she sounded more like a teen than an adult. And it certainly wasn't Ruffnut.

So a new girl? That would explain why she was willingly talking to him. But who is she? No boats arrived yesterday. Where did she come from?

Astrid Hofferson shook her head. _Let's start caring about yourself, not the others. This isn't your problem._

She was on her way to the door, when she heard something that stopped her in her tracks.

"I don't give personal information to complete strangers."

That was something Hiccup would say, except for... he didn't say that. It was the girl!

"But I saved you!"

THAT was Hiccup. And he sounded sincere. Really? He... _saved someone? _No way!

"I met you not even 24 hours ago, I don't know your name, age, nor social status. I don't know where I am, why you took me here, ignoring my warnings completely and I am _wondering, _what were you doing in the forest, so far from the village, so late, _in the rain..."_

The girl again. She didn't bother to correct him about the saving, so it was probably true. What really bothered Astrid, was the last part of the sentence. He came late yesterday. Really late. Not to mention soaking wet and with the deep-in-thought look. Really, what was he doing out there?

A silence followed, during which she didn't dare to even _breathe_.

The girl spoke up again. "I'm not stupid, you know. I know how far I was from the village."

She knew she shouldn't be doing this, but now she was really curious. What was Hiccup doing so late in the forest, apparently really far from home?

When Hiccup said nothing, the girl said: "Let's make a deal. You won't ask what I was doing out there and I won't ask you."

"Agreed," she heard Hiccup say.

So both Hiccup and the girl had their secrets. The blonde wasn't sure which one intrigued her more. Let's find out.

She leaned forward on one of the pillars in the Hall and almost jumped out of her skin when someone tapped her shoulder. She spun around, to see the twins Ruffnut and Tuffnut grinning at her widely.

"Ruff, Tuff!" she hissed. "What are you doing here?!"

"We wanted to put some laxative on the food," replied Tuffnut casually.

"That's not important. Who are you spying on?" smirked Ruffnut.

"No one. Just shut up and be quiet!" Astrid hissed again.

Both siblings shared a look that said: definitely eavesdropping. Then they grinned even wider and listened carefully.

"That brings me to another question. Why didn't you want me to help you?"

When they heard Hiccup's voice, their eyes widened. "You're spying on Hiccup?" Ruffnut asked in disbelief, not understanding her friend in the slightest.

Astrid covered her mouth with her palm before the girl could say anything else. "Quiet!" she reminded. This was getting really interesting...

"I thought we agreed not to talk about it," said the girl, warning clear in her voice.

It wouldn't be Hiccup if he didn't try once more. "But I thought tha-

"Never," the girl commanded, cutting him off. The three blondes shuddered at her tone. That girl wasn't someone to play with.

"So, new girl, huh?" Tuffnut whispered, so quietly the two girls barely heard him.

"You have any idea who it could be?" asked Ruffnut, also whispering. "Or where is she from?"

"No," Astrid whispered back. "Let's find out."

* * *

><p>Hiccup was interrupted from his thoughts about Astrid's and Nala's similarities when footsteps echoed from behind him. He looked up at Nala and she looked back at him. She then tilted her head aside, peaking around his shoulder to search for the source of the noise. Her eyes locked one someone and she examined him, so he turned in his seat.<p>

Speak about the devil and he shall appear, he thought as he saw the three teens - Astrid, Ruffnut and Tuffnut.

"Hey guys," he greeted them.

The blondes ignored him, instead looked right at Nala.

"Hi, guess you're new here," said Tuffnut, at the same time Ruffnut asked "Hi, what's your name?" They glared at each other, while Astrid frowned at them. She then turned to Nala, looked her up and down and told her simple: "Hey."

"Hi," the girl answered. "Call me Nala."

"How is that a name?" asked Tuffnut. "I never heard it."

Ruffnut scowled at her brother and punched him in the shoulder. "That doesn't mean it isn't a name, moron!" Then she walked to Nala and sat on the table next to her. "Sorry, my brother can be such an idiot sometimes," she apologised. Sticking out her hand, she added: "I'm Ruffnut." Nala looked the girl over warily, then hesitantly took the offered hand and shook it.

Ruffnut then introduced the two others. "That cool one scowling at you is Astrid—"

The scowl was now redirected right at Ruffnut.

"—and my lovely retarded brother's name is Tuffnut."

The boy in question appeared behind Ruffnut and pulled on one of her braids, making her squeak and then growl at him, starting another one of their fights.

Nala watched them with curious interest. "Wow, they won't stop, will they?" she asked, her eyes narrowed.

"Nope," replied Hiccup. "I hope you won't join them, we couldn't handle triplets."

"Don't worry. Won't happen."

Astrid then sat at the table, keeping her distance from Hiccup. "So, where did you come from?"

Nala tensed, not knowing what to say, but really NOT wanting to tell the truth. Before she could snap at Astrid, Hiccup answered for her:

"Uh, I found her in the forest yesterday."

When everyone stared at him and he realised how weird it sounded, he tried to correct his mistake with "Near the village" but it didn't really help.

"In the forest?" Tuffnut asked.

"Yeah," was all Nala said.

"Yesterday _evening?"_asked Astrid.

"Mmh-hmm."

"_Near the village?"_Astrid asked again, now irritated with the other girl.

Nala stared into the blonde's blue eyes, daring her to question her statement. The others were silent, holding their breath, watching the two girls perform a very impressive glaring contest. After what felt like hours, Nala spoke.

"So you guys are Hiccup's friends?"

If they weren't silent before, they will fall into a very uncomfortable and tense silence after that.

The three of them shared a look and Tuff replied. "Yeah, kind of."

"Fine," Nala smiled at them. Hiccup's lips were twitching into a smile and he noticed Nala was holding back one of her own

"It was nice to meet you."

And with that, Nala stood up and walked away, swaying her hips all the way to the Great hall's door.

* * *

><p>So, I hope you liked that! Anyway, scroll down there and click that review button, unless you want to wait for next chapter. Also, it makes my day.

**And, again, tell me what you think about Nala. You think she's crazy? Also, I'm sorry for Astrid, but I just had to do that.
=3**

6. Chapter 6

Ollo, everyone! :D I am back, with another chapter! I don't have the next chapter just yet, but I wanted to update in time - it is almost week from the last chapter.

After no one reviewed (except for dear maggilefay - thank you!) I lost my motivation and I haven't even looked at this story. But! I still edited this chapter a little and I hope you like it.

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>On their way back home, Hiccup had to think about what happened in the Great hall. He knew she was rather impressive human being even before, but after seeing Nala beat Astrid, with one long _glare_... She had his respect.

Bu he couldn't think about it, because she wanted to hear more about the village, the tribe and even - surprisingly - himself. He though he'll lose her once she meets the "cool guys" but he had a strange suspicion she wasn't impressed. (Note the sarcasm)

It seemed strange, odd and quite unlikely, but maybe, just _maybe,_ he finally had a friend.

So, as they headed back to the Chief's house, he told her which building had which purpose, who lived where and when he knew some funny stories he told her as well. He talked about the tribe's history, not much in detail, he just mentioned the most important things. And before he could start talking about himself, they stopped in front of the house, which he was grateful for.

Hiccup went inside first, opening the door for her like a true gentleman. She just grinned at him. Once inside, Hiccup went upstairs, Nala close behind, curious about how his room looked.

It was small, with just one window. Not much furniture could fit in there, only bed, closet, a few bookshelves and a writing desk. A writing desk covered in sketches, designs, or regular drawings, some of them simple, some of them in more detail. There were also several paintbrushes, pencils and two candle sticks. Nala was at the desk in an instant, examining all the piled up papers.

"What are these?" she asked.

"Oh," sounded from behind her. "Those are my sketches. I have more at the forge. Trying to prove myself is quite difficult, I don't have the skills to kill a dragon in regular combat, so I've designed various weapons and contraptions, to kill dragons from distance," explained Hiccup.

From the sad look on his face Nala could tell how well those machines worked. "They didn't work, did they?" she asked softly.

He was silent for a moment, as if deciding how to answer.

"No, they didn't," he said finally. "That's why I have to go now."

Nala looked at him. He was standing there, holding an axe and a shield, both apparently too heavy for him to carry.

"Nice axe," she commented. "Dragon training?"

He sighed, his shoulders slumped. "Yeah. Father wants me to train with the others. He's convinced that someday, I'll be able to kill dragons," he replied, voice dripping with sarcasm. Turning around, he headed downstairs again. "Anyway, the herbs are in the kitchen, if you want some tea and if you get hungry there's also a piece of bread. Not too much but it'll do before I come back."

"Wait." Her voice stopped him in his tracks. He looked back at her, his hand still in midair, reaching for the door handle.

She was bent now, her hair straight down from the gravity force. A piece of leather in her hand, she tied her hair with it, making a simple ponytail high on her head. When she straightened up again, she shook her head. The movement caused the ponytail to swing around, looking like a real tail for a moment.

"Okay, ready to go," she said cheerfully, stepping to the door. When nothing happened, she asked impatiently: "So?"

"No way," Hiccup replied, "there's no way you are coming with me."

Nala frowned.

"It's too dangerous," he objected.

She raised an eyebrow, still frowning. She really didn't have to

talk, her face said it all:

It's not like I'll be training with you.

"You are in a bad condition. You're too weak."

Come on, it's just a little trip.

"The Arena is on the other side of the island! You need to rest."

This time, she punched him in the arm to prove him wrong.

"Ouch." _That hurt. _"You really have to do this?" he demanded, a little offended now. _Seriously? He knew how weak HE was, but did life really have to remind him EVERYDAY?_

The smirk on her face grew even wider, when he gave an exasperated sigh. "Fine, you can come with me."

Fist pump followed, with a silent "Yes!"

"But you'll take of these boots of yours."

Nala looked down on her probably-dragon boots, then up at him again, making perfect puppy eyes, begging him.

"No."

More silent begging. _Gods, how was she doing it? How could a creepy girl like her pull of such a cute face was a mystery..._

"Don't worry, your boots will be safe in here, no one would dare to steal from Chief's house," he said, trying to convince her.

Nala let it be eventually, took of her boots, carefully placing them at the bed. After she put on his old ones, they could (finally) get out. However, just before they did, she sent a small kiss in the direction of her boots, whispering: "Bye Girls, I'll be back soon."

_Alright, I take it back, _Hiccup thought. _She IS crazy._

* * *

><p>"So, since I already told you a lot about myself, why don't you tell me something about you?" asked Hiccup on the way to the Arena.<p>

_They were going to the Arena and they'll meet Snotlout AND Fishlegs, who was _smart_ - probably the smartest of the gang. And, Hiccup highly doubted Gobber won't ask questions. That was why he decided to break the silence and ask for answers she doesn't want to give. They'll ask questions - questions they shouldn't ask - and Hiccup knew he should know the answers before they get to the Ring._

"I thought we agreed not to talk about it," warned Nala.

_Ok, carefull now, Hiccup. Carefull, as if walking on thin ice. Carefull, cautious, small steps. Just state the truth, that should do

the trick._

"We agreed not to ask why were we in the forest. This is different."

She was just hiding behind their deal, so she won't have to answer his questions. At least Hiccup thought so.

She eyed him, as if deciding whether trust him or not. When she spoke, it was in a sad voice. "Those two things are related."

_Here goes my chance! Seriously, why? Related? How? _How?

When he didn't respond, she told him: "If you want to know, I can give you some basic information, that won't hurt anything, but first, why is this _place_ so empty?"

She's just trying to change the subject, don't get distracted.

Hiccup looked around the quiet village and said: "Well, early in the morning, the streets are always empty, but it's not so early anymore. You can't see anyone because almost the whole village's gone with my dad. They are looking for the Dragon nest."

A dark shadow appeared on her face. "They won't find it," she said quietly.

"That's exactly what I always say, but he won't listen," Hiccup agreed, then admitted: "He never listens to me."

After a while of silent walking, he snapped out of it. "But, you promised to tell me something about yourself. I'm listening," he informed her, smiling.

She almost made me drop the subject. How was she doing it?

Nala smiled back at him. "Well, I am 17," she started. "I'm..."

hesitation

"...not from around here. I'm not from Berk."

Hiccup decided not to comment it. He simply nodded, motioning for her to continue. She seemed thankful for that. _Her past isn't her favorite topic, _he thought.

"I've lost my social status long ago along with my family."

pause

"And... home."

Silence, broken by a sheep bleating.

Then she changed the topic. "I'm not your typical damsel in distress." Nala smiled proudly at that. "I'm a little out of practice now, but I know how to handle a sword. I love archery."

"I like to read and draw, I love animals and the most useful thing I can do is making clothes and weapons."

"Weapons?" he asked, confused.

"And some types of armor."

It was his turn to raise an eyebrow for once.

"Well, not real ones, I'm not a smith," she admitted.

Not real ones? What does she mean? And if she isn't a smith, how can she make weapons?

At his confused expression, she laughed. "Not all weapons are made of steel. You'll be surprised how hard a Monstrous Nightmare's horn can be."

He gulped.

"And sharp," she added.

Hiccup shivered. _She really hated dragons, didn't she?_

Maybe it was a good idea to make the deal with her. He had no idea why the dragon hasn't kill him, but he didn't want Nala to kill it, or tell the villagers.

Soon, they were at the Arena. Hiccup knew he should warn her, so he spoke up, breaking the silence. "Before we go in there, you should probably know something."

Curious, she looked at him, tilting her head a little. For some reason it looked freaking cute.

"Those guys call me Useless. I'm considered a curse around here. Everytime I step outside, disaster falls. Literary." He sighed. "If you'll stick with me, I'll drag you down. Just so you know."

She nodded, smiling to herself.

What's going on in her head is a mystery...

* * *

><p>So, you like it? Hate it? Nothing special? Tell me! Just fill the empty slot down there with some words (you can hate me - you'll probably break my heart, but I'll be fine in the end - I am glad for every review)

As you (I hope you did) noticed, I wasn't joking about the last possible update. No reviews - long wait. Get it? /=(

**Plus, every reviewer get's a big hug for free! ;) **

7. Chapter 7

**Okay, I am back! The good news is, I brought a new chapter with me.

The second good news is, it is the longest yet!**

The bad news is... I don't really like the first part. Maybe you'll say otherwise, maybe you'll like it. And I really hope you will. Maybe because I actually like it? I am confused... The last part came out pretty well, I think, but I need you to tell me if i screwed up the first.

**Nevermind! ENJOY! ;) **

* * *

><p>Sitting on the Arena's cage bars, sharpening her axe, Astrid listened to Ruffnut and Tuffnut arguing. Well, more like tried to ignore them. They kept going on and on for almost half an hour!<p>

What a beautiful day. You miss your morning jogging and then the twins talk a hole in your head. And that's only morning!

Then there was the new girl. Ruffnut and Tuffnut were talking about her all the way from the Great hall to the Ring. Or, more precisely, the first few minutes before they started fighting over who's the best headbutter. They seemed pretty excited, unlike Astrid. The other two maybe fell for the "found near the village" thing, but she didn't trust the girl. Long story short, Astrid was suspicious. Nala had secrets and the blonde was determined to uncover them. She will get her answers.

The teen was interrupted from her thoughts when Fishlegs and Snotlout joined them. They greeted them and for a while, Astrid didn't have to join the conversation and she was grateful for that - she wasn't in the mood for some pointless arguing if Snotlout could beat Tuffnut with only his left hand or not. As time passed and they watched Gobber prepare a wooden labyrinth in the Ring, Ruffnut mentioned "Nala."

"So, new girl, huh?" Snotlout was the first one to react.

"Yeah," said Ruffnut. "She's like, super cool."

"Really?" Fishlegs piped in.

"Dude, she stared-off Astrid!" grinned Tuffnut.

That caught Fishlegs' and Snotlout's attention. They shared a look. A new girl able to stare-off the toughest viking teen? That sounded... _dangerous_.

All of them looked at Astrid. She tried to keep a neutral expression, but somehow, her angered face just confirmed Tuffnut's statement.

Fishlegs, sensing the tension coming from her, changed the subject on Dragon training and they started talking again, pretending nothing happened.

* * *

><p>Hiccup the Useless? How thick heads do those vikings have?

Nala thought as they came to the Arena.

In an instant, all eyes were on them. The two guys she hasn't met yet looked curious. Astrid though... she was scowling again.

Nala knew the blonde didn't trust her. It was understandable. This Astrid wasn't stupid. Naturally, she didn't trust Nala. And, really, why should anyone?

"So, that's Fishlegs," Hiccup said then, pointing to the group of teens, "and Snotlout."

"Hey, you didn't say she's with Useless," whined the one she assumed was 'Snotlout'.

Hiccup gave Nala his best "told you" face, probably hoping she won't join the dark side just yet, and her lips tugged into a small smirk. She walked straight to the group and greeted them. Then, eyeing the black-haired one, she asked: "You must be the, um, _Snotlout, _right?" She grimaced at the name for extra effect.

He nodded. "Yup, that's me. You are...?"

Her respond was quick, automatic.

"Call me Nala."

She grinned. "Snotlout, really? That's your _name_?"

"_You're _one to talk," Tuffnut commented. "_Nala."_"

"Oh, I don't think so. _Tuffnut,_" she shot back.

Ruffnut laughed at him, which earned her a punch on her shoulder. A nice little battle began and Nala really didn't mind it, but it could get out of hand quickly, so she stepped in:

"Come on guys, let's agree that we all have weird and offensive names. Like Fishlegs."

They all looked at each other, including poor Fishlegs, thinking about their names and eventually, they nodded, all but Astrid.

Satisfied, Nala grinned: "Well, all except for me."

This time, a bunch of no's, not really's, hey's, arg's and what's was said. And Astrid was slowly becoming red in the face.

Push just a little more...

"Oh, all except for me _and _Astrid._ Am I right, _Hiccup_"

The teens chuckled and Nala along with them, knowing Astrid will lose it soon. She tried to keep calm, she really did, but it clearly wasn't working. Nala could see her knuckles white from gripping her axe too tight, her clenched teeth, her deep breaths. She's done it! Astrid officially hates her!

Hiccup blushed, chuckled nervously and replied: "Yeah. Well, I won't

be bothered by trolls, at least."

Astrid tried, she really did, but when she saw her friends, laughing with the freaking annoying black-haired girl, she just lost it.

"Hiccup, what is she _doing _here?"

All of them turned to stare at her, surprised.

"What's wrong with that?" asked Nala, pretending to be offended, but actually quite pleased with the result.

The group jumped, when the smith - Hiccup said his name's Gobber - appeared behind them "Well, for example," he said, "we don't need another toothpick in here. Where did you get that thin, lass?"

"I don't want to _train_," Nala explained, ignoring the last question. "Not now, anyway. I just want to watch."

How was the cute look? Oh, right - small smile, eyes wide open, but not wide like saucers, blink a few times, but not too much, tilt your head a little...

Astrid looked like she was going to throw up from the face Nala was giving them.

"Actually, she isn't supposed to be here," Hiccup interrupted. "Gothi said she should rest until she gains some weight."

Nala shot him a look, instantly dropping the innocent face. How _could_ he?

Astrid gasped. "Who do you think you are? How _dare _you disobey the Elder?!" She almost screamed the last part.

However, the smith shook his head: "She's already here, she can stay."

"_For today_," he added, when Astrid opened her mouth to protest. He then turned to Nala herself. Pointing at her with his hook, he stated: "Before you fit in these clothes of yours-" he gestured to her tunic hanging loose at her thin waist, "I don't want to see you anywhere near this Ring. Clear?"

_ "Clear," _Nala nodded, not too far from saluting.

"Alright, let's get started!" Gobber exclaimed, shooing the confused recruits to the Ring.

Nala leaned on the Ring's bars, smiling to herself. It didn't matter she'll have to wait. All she needed was to see how those vikings fought, worked and interacted together. Nala learnt long ago that the fastest way to get to know a person you've just met is to observe the way they fight and how they interact with other people.

Training with them wasn't something she would like to go through, anyway. She knew what malnutrition could do to her and it would be dangerous to go in the Ring in her state.

And don't forget the curse...

A dark shadow fell across her face as she remembered what the beast has done to her. To her parents. To _Him_.

I'm going to find you, dragon. And when I do, I'll kill you, even if it's the last thing I'll do.

I'll revenge my family.

* * *

><p>"Come on, get that scrawny ass off the ground," sounded above him, just as a thin, pale hand appeared in his field of vision. He looked up.<p>

Nala was standing above him, smiling a little, holding out a hand to help him up. Hiccup sat up from the fetal position he was in, took her hand and stood up. Astrid frowned at Nala, who happily returned it with a cold glare. Then she told him: "Let's get out of here."

Just before they left the Ring, she sent everyone present last hard look and pushed Hiccup out of the Arena. They walked silently for a while, until Nala spoke up.

"Well, that went well."

"Yeah," he said. "That went _awesome!_"

Nala chuckled: "No, not _awesome_. _Well_ yes, but definitely not _awesome._" At his confused look, she laughed. "I won't lie - I don't think you'll kill a dragon anytime soon - but you weren't the worst."

"Not the worst? Come on, I'm a screw up!"

_"_Maybe you are, but have you seen the others?" the teen asked him. "You should see them. They're a bunch of amateurs." She huffed at the last sentence.

"Really?" he asked in disbelief. _How could they be worse than he was?_

"All except for Astrid," Nala deadpanned. "She's going to be a great dragon killer one day."

Hiccup shuddered. "Tell me about it."

She laughed again. _Seriously, everything is a joke to her. That, or she knows more than he does._

"You should see Snotlout!" She stopped, made a "heroic" pose and parodied Snotlout's flirty voice, the one he always used on Astrid: "Watch out, babe, I'll take care of this!" She then swung her arm as if throwing something. She pretended to be terribly disappointed, like she missed and after a pause she excused herself with a dramatic: "The sun was in my eyes, Astrid!"

Hiccup was laughing by now and Nala happily joined him. "Believe me,

Hiccup, it was hilarious!" she chuckled. "Even the Nadder found it funny! I swear she laughed at him!" That made Hiccup laugh even more, until he realised what she said.

"Wait, _she_?"

"Oh." She looked for an explanation. "You see, that Nadder is a female. They have lighter spikes on the tail and a little differently situated horns on the head."

_How much did she really know about dragons? _Hiccup wanted to ask more, but she quickly changed the subject.

"Anyway, Ruffnut and Tuffnut are pretty fun to watch. They almost got killed just because they were fighting again."

"Yeah, but-" he was cut off when she said something unexpected.

"And by the way, I absolutely _do not _agree with Ruffnut. She's wrong about you."

"What?" was all he could say. He didn't know what she was talking about, but how could she not agree with Ruffnut? And it was about _him_?

Nala smirked. "You remember the nice little cuddling you had with Astrid back in the Ring?"

It was not cuddling! How can she say such a thing?

"You mean how she fell on me and then almost smashed my head with her boot?" he deadpanned, or at least _tried_ to.

"Yup, that's it. Tuffnut called it 'Love on the battlefield'."

When he blushed, she chuckled. "And guess what Ruffnut told him?"

He looked her straight in the eye, really not wanting to guess, but eventually, he groaned: "Ah, fine - what?"

"She said Astrid could do better."

Well, he wasn't surprised. It was true. Astrid won't come anywhere near him if she was on fire and he had the last bucket of water. So why was Nala telling him something he already knew? Well, she said before, that...

Wait.

Wait.

"And, you don't _agree_ with her?" he asked in disbelief. She laughed at him again and then elbowed him softly, carefull not to hurt him. "Think about it," she said. "There's Fishlegs, Snotlout, Tuffnut and you. I don't think she's ever thought about anyone in a romantic way - she seems too cold and professional for that - but let's summon that up."

"The only one who shows affection for her is Snotlout and I don't believe she could ever have something with him. If it won't be for

his extreme annoying-ness, he's such a big head. He doesn't have the best physique, nor looks, he's shorter than she is, _and_..." she paused dramatically, "he _stinks_."

"Maybe he could have a tiny, _teeny, tiny _chance to be good in dragon training, but he's too busy trying to impress her. Snotlout is out."

Hiccup had to agree with that. "That makes sense."

Nala grinned. "Then there are Fishlegs and Tuffnut. Can you imagine Astrid with _Fishlegs_?"

Hiccup shuddered, regretting listening to her. "That's disturbing," he said after a moment.

She laughed: "Or with Tuffnut! Imagine Astrid - the faithful wife of Tuffnut." They both chuckled. "That's even weirder."

Hiccup paused when it hit him. "But then there's no one left."

"You are forgetting about a certain _someone_, Hiccup," Nala reminded, blinking at him.

"Yeah, like I stand a chance." _Where is she going with that?_

"You are underestimating yourself. Trust me when I say: Five years later, she's yours."

"That sure sounds nice. You want to bet? I could use some money right now."

"Hiccup," she groaned. "I'm serious!"

"Then what do I have that the others don't?" he demanded, slowly getting tired from the conversation.

She smiled. "For example, you have a sense of humor. Dry humor, but still. You are entertaining to watch. You aren't a big head and in a way, you aren't annoying. You are smart. You draw well. I know it doesn't look like much in a viking point of view, but it _is_ something._"

Hiccup wanted to stop her first, but he ended up listening to her, stunned. No one's ever spoken to him like that. His whole life, he was told all those things he sucked in. No one ever bothered with telling him he was good at something. Now, someone saw some _good_ in him and cared for him enough to say it out loud. And it felt nice. Finally someone who saw past his scrawny, unlucky, useless appearance. A dragonkiller, of all people! And right after she saw him screw up again in the Ring. She didn't know him too well, but if she could understand, maybe others could too.

Nala suddenly took out a very familiar book and opened it. "I mean, look. All those contraptions are amazing!"

"Wha- you... How long exactly have you been carrying it around?" he asked, now angry with her and (even if he won't ever admit it) a little impressed.

How in the name of Thor did she get her hands on his sketchbook? He hasn't even felt it. Was she a pickpocket or something?

"Oops, sorry," she apologised. "For a while now." She handed it back to him and then pointing at the object in his hands, she said: "I like it."

Hiccup quickly put it back where it belonged, making a mental note to check every once a while if it's still there. He jumped, when Nala suddenly came too close for his liking. She locked her blue-gray eyes with his green ones and smirked.

"And I especially liked the last drawing. Nice dragon."

* * *

><p>:) DUN, DUN, DUUUUUN!**

Cliffhanger, guys! :D I just had to do that... That's who I am - I love cliffhangers, even the smallest ones. (Don't tell the other writers out there, but I love cliffhangers even when I can't sleep because of them)

Don't forget to review! Every reviewer gets a sketch of Toothless signed by Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III. himself! ;) (It's a limited edition)

...and as a bonus, you'll make my day.

May your day be filled with happiness!

~M.

8. Chapter 8

Yaaay, I'm back! And today, with a new chapter!

This one was awfull to write, but I hope the hard work and the time I spent writing it has payed off.

We have some angst in here, some hurt, some foreshadowing... and, uh- oh right!

For those who are wondering, yes, this story is mostly Nala-centered, because I'm sure she's going to change many things. But I'm not sure if I want Hiccstrid here or HiccupxOC. In my opinion, Hiccup and Astrid somehow belong to each other - yes, I ship Hiccstrid. Nala does change a lot of things for me, that's true.

For now, there won't be much romance, also because I don't write sweet stuff that good.

**I expect this to be Hiccstrid, maybe, maybe for what happened to Nala will prevent her from any romantic thoughts just yet.
;)**

Anyways, on with the story.

****Enjoy!****

* * *

><p>He froze. Nala cocked her head at him, awaiting his response.<p>

How could he be so stupid? Of course she would look at the last picture. It just had to be the drawing of the night fury. The gods really did hate him. First, he almost loses the ultimate dragon prize. When he finds it, it almost kills him. Then he starts questioning himself, because the night fury didn't kill him. Suddenly he stumbles upon this girl from gods-know-where, takes her home to save her life and now she's snooping around, stealing his sketchbooks and discovering his secrets. Hiccup was irritated and angry, but at the same time, he was curious.

How did Nala steal it from him? Why did she do so? Does she know what species the dragon is? If she does, where did she get that information, if no one has supposedly ever seen a night fury? How much does she know? Why does she want to know? Is it curiosity? Or blackmail?

But the biggest question was: Why would she just tell him she saw the picture? Isn't it better to keep your knowledge a secret, so you can surprise your opponent? She looked smart, yet insane at the same time. What was she playing?

At the very moment, many questions ran through the girl's head too. Was the sketch really of the dragon she thought it was? If it was, how did Hiccup get so close to a night fury, of all the dragons? It was not like you could just stumble upon one on a walk in the forest. If she was correct, there was only one night fury in the archipelago, IF he was still alive. So how did a dragon like this one and Hiccup meet? And how did the dragon lose his tailfin?

She had no idea.

Hiccup and Nala looked at each other, thinking. The two of them stood like that for a while in silence, on a cliff overlooking most of the island. The cold wind was blowing past them. Nala didn't realise where they were going until then. What were they doing there? Weren't they going to the Chief's house?

"What do you want?" Hiccup suddenly blurted out. He was sick of unanswered questions. What a better way to get your answers than to ask, right?

Nala smiled. "I want a lot of things. It's just that I don't usually get all I want."

"What game are you playing? How did you steal my sketchbook? Why did you come to Berk and what are you doing here?" Hiccup said. Now the words were shooting out of his mouth like arrows. "Why are you even interested in talking to me? What's behind it?" the viking demanded.

"WHAT do you WANT?" he pleaded, his green eyes meeting hers. She had strange eyes. Bright icy blue around the pupils little by little melting into the grey around, darkening from bright to the dark shade

of the rocks on Raven beach. Strange he noticed it at a moment like this one.

Suddenly, those eyes were wide open, staring at him like at an apparition. She quickly tore her gaze away from him, composing herself while she examined the interesting moss under her feet.

She looked out at the sea then, watched the waves dance on the glistening surface of the wild ocean. Images flashed through her mind. Of a cliff far away. A cave in a forest. A pond. Her own reflection in the water. A man with golden bristly hair and bright yellow eyes. The man who asked her the same question.

The words echoed in her head like a half-whisper in a cave:

What do you want?

The memory struck her like lightning, but at the same time, in a weird, confusing way, it calmed her down.

She should apologise to him. For all her curiosity, she forgot what his likely reaction might be.

Hiccup looked up at her. She was watching the sea, looking not entirely present, as if remembering something.

There was a long pause during which Hiccup wondered if he said too much. Sure, she looked like a nice girl and she supported him in front of the other teens but he was still suspicious. It was called common sense. Nobody in their right mind would trust a stranger like that.

But that wasn't it. Even if she came to Berk on a ship like any other viking would and grounded the ship in the port like _any other viking_, even if she came with a family, he wouldn't trust her. If it weren't for the dragon cape and boots, she still acted weird.

One moment, she was helping him encrease his self-esteem, acting like an ally, a FRIEND, some might dare to say, and the other she steals his private property. However, it wasn't the stealing what bothered him the most.

Nala looked him in the eye again, took a small step closer to him and said softly: "Is it all about the sketchbook? I'm sorry." She took another step, lifting an eyebrow "Though I think I said that already."

"No, it's not about that," Hiccup snapped.

What really bothered him, was that he wouldn't even realize she took it, if she didn't wanted him to know. If she could steal it without him noticing, she could put it back and he would never know. So why did she show it to him? The drawing was the same mystery. She didn't have to tell him she saw it. It would give her more advantage.

There was no logical motivation for her to do it. When you have hidden abilities, you keep them a secret. Unless you're crazy. Or want to have fun.

Yeah, he was pretty much sure she's done it for the sole purpose of

having something to laugh at.

OR, she was trying to confuse him. If that was the case, she was definitely doing it right.

"You're confusing me, " the redhead admitted. He just didn't know anymore.

"Oh. That's what's bothering you," she said and smiled for herself. "Don't worry about that. I confuse everyone. It's natural."

"_Natural_?"

"I'm sorry. It wasn't intentional."

He searched her face for any sign of mockery or pretense that would tell him she was lying. He found none. She was being honest with him and that angered and calmed him at the same time. Why can't he be angry at her for even a second?

She smiled sheepishly and added: "I'm a curious person."

Before he decided if he hated her or not, she was already continuing on their stroll to the Elders house, like nothing happened.

When she turned around and called to him "You coming?", that's when it struck him.

The Elder! How could he forget?

The night when Hiccup brought Nala home, he went to the Elder's house for some herbs for the tea and also to tell her about the new girl. Strangers and travellers were usually welcome on Berk. All they had to do, was meet the Elder and answer some of her questions. From past experience Hiccup knew it didn't really matter if they wished to keep their identity a secret. All Gothi wanted to know was their intentions. If she saw they're lying or not telling her something important, she would proclaim them untrustworthy and - unless the Chief intervened, which happened rarely - they had to leave as soon as possible and the villagers kept their eyes on them meanwhile.

However, if she chose to stay and live with the Hooligan tribe, Nala will have to talk about her past and that sure was something she didn't want to do. Hiccup knew all those who started a new life on Berk told Gothi their secrets. Some of them probably quite scary or disturbing.

Their secrets were safe with the Elder. She never talked. Whatever Nala would tell to the Elder, no one will find out, unless she chose to tell them herself.

"Hiccup? What is it?" Nala asked, noting his sudden change of mood. "Where are we going anyway?"

Unsure how to start, Hiccup stumbled over his own words. "Well, about that... I- You know, uh, you're probably not going to like it."

Nala narrowed her eyes at him and her previous smile

disappeared.

"It's about the Elder. She wants to see you," he said, trying his best to make eye contact.

Nala's eyes suddenly got ten times colder, her gray gaze pinning him to the ground. "Hiccup," she hissed. "What are you talking about?" The tone suggested explanations right away, unless you wanted a punch in the face.

The boy gulped. He wanted to put it a little more gently, to prepare her for the bad news. Now she was angry and he had to explain. Quickly.

"You know, you- you're new here and all," he started, his voice shaking. "And Gothi told me to bring you to her after you get, um, better, so..." He trailed off, nervous and not knowing what to say.

"So...?" Nala asked, looking ready to murder.

"You just have to prove we can trust you, it's nothing, really." Hiccup tried to make it look a little less important, but it wasn't working. "You'll only have to answer a few questions and then the elder will see."

"See what?" Nala asked. "If I am lying or not? If I am hiding something?" The girl stepped closer, so they practically breathed the same air. "We had a deal Hiccup." She pointed an accusing finger at him.

Her eyes were glaring daggers at him. He couldn't stand those ice cold orbs piercing through his head and staring into his very soul, yet it was impossible to tear his gaze away. He was like a cornered rodent. Nala was like big feline with its hackles up, poised to strike.

"The deal was I won't ask you if you won't ask me," he objected, taking a step back from her.

She inhaled sharply. There were holes in the deal. Holes through which she could see him. Holes through which she could watch, examine. Holes she could use to her advantage. Now she realised he could use the holes as well. She couldn't hide behind their agreement forever.

Nala took a deep breath and looked behind him, to the sea again. Suddenly, she looked betrayed, almost like a kicked puppy. It struck a chord in his chest and guilt crept into his mind. He hated her for that.

"I've been travelling for a long time now, Hiccup," she said, voice unexpectedly serious. "I've seen things you vikings never saw, things you might never discover."

"It was the best and worst thing that's ever happened to me, but..." She bit her lip and hugged herself tightly. "Hiccup," she said urgently, her eyes meeting his. "I don't want that anymore. I don't want to run all the time, I don't want to hide. I.. can't do it." She paused. "I want a place I could call home, a place to return to every

evening." Her arms left her sides so she could make a wild gesture in the air. Then she started pacing back and forth.

"A place where I could have friends. A place where I could _forget_."

She was breathing heavily, practically panting, eyes glassy with tears she refused to shed in front of him, the weakness she refused to show. Hiccup could feel the honest hurt and desperation radiating from her. He wanted to say something to comfort her, but she continued her heated monologue.

"And now you want me to- now I have to, to... _talk_ about it?" She stopped her pacing and turned to stare at him incredulously, as if she still couldn't believe the world would ask her to do such a thing.

Suddenly anger flashed through her eyes. She bared her teeth at him and he heard a low growl escape her throat.

"I know I have to go there. And I will." She lifted her hand and poked him in the chest.

"I will talk, sure." She poked him again. Her black hair, cold blue gaze and dark circles under her eyes added extra effect to her predator look. "And I won't lie." Poke. "But there's only so much I will tell her."

The tears started streaming down her face, like an imaginary dam's broken in her eyes, letting the drops of water pour from them. Nala turned her back to him, obviously uncomfortable with him watching her.

"I'm sorry," he told her. "I wouldn't ask you to do it if it wouldn't be necessary. You don't have to tell her much, only the most important things."

He lifted his arm to pat her shoulder to comfort her, but then thought better of it and let his hand down again.

"You don't need to worry she'll tell anyone," he assured her. "The Elder never talks. Just remember: _no lies_."

To his relief, she nodded. Then, without a look back at him, she headed for the Elder's house. Over her shoulder, she called to him: "I'll see you back at the house. Don't touch my things 'till I come back."

He rushed after her. "Wait, where are you going?"

"To the Elder, genius." A sob escaped her as she answered. "She lives up there, right?"

Hiccup stood there, unsure what to do or say as she walked away.

One she comes back, they'll have to seriously reconsider their deal. If she'll be able to stay, anyway.

* * *

><p>:D phew, that was one heck of a chapter to write!

I am pretty pleased with the result and I hope you're too!

Please, pretty please, tell me your opinion in your review. *puppy dog eyes* Read&Review, guys, this story needs your support to survive! (and believe me, I really want it to survive)

So, review, fav, follow, and STAY TUNED!

I love you guys,

~MissSharpenedSpikes

9. Announcement

Everyone, listen up! I have finally used the Christmas holidays to actually do something.

The next chapter should be here in a day or two, but honestly, I hope I can finish it tommorow.

The special thing is, I've prepared a sort-of Christmas present for you. It's a**n attempted**** comic with Nala. It took me a whole day, so I hope you'll like it. I got her into a ridiculous outfit of my own design. Maybe it wasn't very nice of me, but she looked so funny!**

Anyway, I'm going to post the comic on my deviantart account right after I update this story. The direct link to the comic is going to be in the author's note in the chapter.

Farewell and use your taste buds, people. Eat cookies, drink hot chocolate and beware the evil spirit of writer's block!

I love you all,

~**MissSharpenedSpikes**

10. Chapter 9

As promised, here's the next chapter. :D Can you believe it? I've actually finished this on time! I'm proud of myself.

I spent the whole day writing the rest of this chapter (I had the first two parts done but I wrote the rest today) and putting together the comic I told you about in the last update.

You can find it in my gallery. On deviantart, search for MissSharpenedSpikes. The image's called "Nala (OC) - Christmas card comic (attempt)".

misssharpendedspikes . deviantart art /
Nala-OC-Christmas-card-comic-attempt-502930728

**Unfortunately, this site hates URL's. Just remove the spaces and

you should be fine.**

Attention: This chapter is officially the longest yet! And, it's waaay past 4 000 words. Over 4 700, to be more specific. Impossible, right? 4K words!

So, on with the story, I hope you'll like it. Enjoy!

* * *

><p>Tears. She hated crying. Perhaps for the simple reason that she cried too often for her own comfort. Whenever she felt desperate, lonely, home sick or angry, even when she was really happy, she started crying. So much for intimidation. A weak sobbing gal won't scare anyone. At least today she held herself pretty well. If his expression said anything, Hiccup was seriously afraid of her for a moment.<p>

Oh, Hiccup, she thought. Why does everything have to be so complicated? Why can't we just tell each other all our secrets and be friends forever? Why can't I just start over again?

She didn't want to do what she's done, or say what she's said. But... she was so angry, the thought of the injustice, of how unfair the whole thing was-

She exploded.

I have to apologise to him later. If there will be a later.

The girl reached the cottage on top of the hill and slumped down on a bench at the small building. She brought her legs to her chest and hugged them with her arms. A sigh escaped her lips, as she watched the horizon. The wind was stronger up there. It chilled her slightly and her still wet cheeks were getting a little frosty. Nala didn't complain, as the chill helped her to calm down and compose herself, before she had to enter the hut. Sitting on the bench, looking in the distance, hair whipping and swirling around her face in the air where the wind played with it, mind adrift, completely lost in the moment, she felt free again. The sound of waves rolling over on the cold water down bellow, the splashing of ocean as it hit the rocks on Berk's shore, the fresh air itself radiated peace. Nala breathed deeply and imagined the cool air being sucked in her lungs, where it absorbed all her uneasiness, anger and fear, and then making it's exit out of her body through her nose, leaving all the peace and calmness inside her.

When she opened her eyes again with an exhale, she was completely at ease. She watched a couple of birds fly high above the village and then disappear into the woods. At that moment, something tugged at her heart and emotions flooded her mind as she tried to process the new warm feeling in her chest. No, she realized, not new. The feeling was old and dusty, almost forgotten under the pile of other, more current emotions, but she knew the warmth that spread in her chest very well. The place made her feel like nothing could stop her - something not much places could do. Rephrase: something only one place did so far.

I want to stay here.

The realisation hit her like the weight of a mountain. As much as she didn't want to believe it, as much as the truth seemed too cruel to be true, she could do nothing to change it. She arrived there not even three days ago and she already fell in love with the place. It had something special about it, something she longed for, something she felt like she could never live without. It felt like home.

Berk felt like home.

Sure, there was still the tiny "like". Berk would never be her home, no matter what. But it felt like it.

At last, she found a place where no one knew her, a place where she would gladly settle down, yet she was probably not going to be given the chance to do so.

At that moment, she made her decision. She will do whatever it takes to have a chance. No matter what.

* * *

><p>Nala had no idea how long she sat there, only that the sun moved visibly in the sky by the time the door opened next to her, and a short, wrinkled lady hobbled out of the hut. Nala looked up right into the woman's eyes and hoped her own weren't still red and puffy from later, and that the old woman wouldn't find out she was crying.<p>

The elder -Gothi, that's her name, Nala remembered - held the eye contact and her thin lips curled in a welcoming smile. She nodded her head and gestured with her staff for Nala to enter. The lady hobbled inside without a second glance and Nala followed her inside the hut.

It was warm there, the air smelt of various herbs hung from the ceiling, cracking of burning wood could be heard from the fireplace on the other side of the room. The wooden floor creaked under Nala's feet as she stepped in. The walls were all covered in shelves with books, pots, mugs, cups, herbs and many mysterious things which Nala wasn't sure if they were supposed to be ingredients for healing salves and ointments or just a decoration. She spotted a bed in the corner, a large chest next to it and wondered how such an old woman could open the heavy container. In the centre of the small room was a short round table, a couple of stools and an armchair.

Gothi walked over to the fire, and took a kettle hanging over it. She placed it on the small table, then hobbled over to a curtain on the wall, pulled it aside, revealing a second room Nala hasn't noticed before, and walked in. Unsure what to do, Nala quietly stood there, until the elder came back, with a plate, two cups on it, and set them next to the kettle. The short lady turned back to Nala and the girl decided it was the best time to speak now. She cleared her throat, bowed a little and said:

"Good afternoon, madam. You wanted to see me?"

The lady in question opened her mouth in what seemed like a chuckle, except she made no noise. She waved at Nala to come closer and the teen did as told.

Gothi looked her up and down, then started circling her, examining her features. She touched Hiccup's boots with her staff and her brows furrowed. Nala suddenly felt the urge to explain herself. "Hiccup let me borrow his boots, because mine were wet from the storm," she said. The elder nodded and continued her examination. The woman reached for her arm and when Nala didn't flinch away, she pulled it closer. She inspected it for a moment, then a frown settled on her face, as she poked Nala's stomach and both sides, probably noticing the girl's poor weight. The teen jumped, but tried to remain calm, for her future depended on it. Besides, the woman wasn't trying to make her uncomfortable, she simply wanted to be done with this quickly, Nala could see that.

Next, the elder stepped in front of her and lifted both her arms to the tall girl, so Nala dropped into a crouch. The wrinkled lady tugged at her hair, bringing her head closer to her face, running her hands over Nala's cheeks and forehead. Then she forced the girl's mouth wide open, ignoring her incoherent protests, looked deep in her throat and inspected the teeth.

When the old lady loosened her grip, Nala was finally able to free herself and she backed away from her tormenter. Luckily, Gothi seemed satisfied, as she went to sit at the armchair in the centre of the room. She poured herself some tea and leaned back in her seat. Her eyes locked with Nala's as she gestured with a nod of her head and a wave of her hand to the girl to sit down and have some tea.

With shaky steps Nala walked over to the little table, dragged one of the stools closer and sit down. She took the kettle from the table and poured some of the herbal liquid in her wooden cup, all the while feeling the elder's wise eyes on her. It was making her nervous, her hands trembled slightly. It felt like the woman could see right through her and into her very soul. Nala could imagine the wrinkled hands skimming through her memories like flipping pages of a book. The front pages old, blurred and dusty, just like her memories, and the closer she got to the present, the sharper and more focused the writing was.

Perhaps it was just her head messing with her. Nala's mother always said the girl had too big imagination for her own good.

Nala straightened herself in her seat and took a sip of her tea. To rid herself of the image of the elder reading her thoughts, she wondered: Why do these people keep giving me tea?

It's a great way of making someone talk, said a quiet little voice inside her head. Especially when there's added mead in it.

The woman won't drug her, right? If there was something in the drink, the elder would be drinking it too, so in the worst case, it was only alcohol. It was quite possible Nala was being paranoid, since she couldn't taste any alcohol in her drink, but she couldn't help it.

The silence was killing her. The room was warm, smelled nice and the old lady was simply sitting there, looking Nala in the eye, occasionally taking a sip from her cup. The tea smelled nice too and it had an enjoyable taste. Nala felt great - that was the thing. She wasn't supposed to feel good in the stranger's company, but she did. She wasn't supposed to trust the woman.

When she couldn't stand the impossibly, uncomfortably comfortable silence, she cleared her throat and said the first thing she could think of, just for the sake of saying something.

"So, you wanted to see me, or talk to me?" she managed. She cast down her eyes, locking them on a splinter in the wooden floorboards. "Because I honestly have no idea how you want to get your answers without asking."

Nala managed to lift her gaze again and she saw the elder smiling knowingly at her. The old lady's eyes sparkled with amusement, as the teen in front of her realized she had to answer unspoken questions. Somehow, she knew exactly what the woman meant, what she wanted to hear. But how much exactly was enough for the elder to let her stay with the village? Nala's heart hammered against her ribcage, thoughts swirled around in her head.

What if she won't say enough? What if she'll say too much? Will the woman really keep her secrets to herself, if that happened?

Calm down, jumpy, said the rational part of her brain. Nervosity won't help you now. Focus.

* * *

><p>It was a beautiful day. Few creamy clouds covered the sun, which occasionally peeked around the stark white pillow-like mass. Light breeze was bending the grass, tilting the trees. The forest was quiet at the moment. All animals, big and small either ran a safe distance away, or hid in the bushes, covering in fear of a pissed dragon's wrath.<p>

Not that they had anything to worry about. Apart from the occasional blind plasma blast, the night fury's rampage focused on the cove only, as it was the only place within it's reach.

Damn hatchling!

The dragon shrieked as he was falling to the ground once again. With a loud thud and an angry growl, the night fury crash-landed on his right wing. A jolt of pain shot through his wing and backside. He lifted his back so he could pull the wing from under his body. His wings, muscles, claws and tail hurt from his constant (and futile) attempts to get out of his prison.

Yes, that's right. The dragon was stuck in there. He couldn't climb out, the walls were too steep and there wasn't enough cracks for him to climb on. He couldn't fly away either. His left tailfin was missing.

When the rope curled around his limbs, he thought he was going to die. He was falling down and down, unable to do anything to stop the fall. He crashed and the pain blinded him, he couldn't see anything but darkness, couldn't hear anything over the ringing in his ears. He could feel nothing but the pain jolting through his body. His screeching died in his throat, he couldn't even scream. He just stayed still, kept his eyes shut tight and begged for it to end.

He finally lost his consciousness and thought he was coming to Syx to

be judged by the Great Dragoness of the Sky, but then he woke up again. His whole body ached and his limbs were still bound. The pain wasn't as bad as before, but he was awake again and it went on and on and on. It was torture. He knew he was going to die sooner or later. Bound, stuck on the spot, waiting for some bigger wolf or a daring lynx to come and get him. Maybe nothing will find him and he'll die of starvation or dehydration.

If the two-legs find him, he's as good as dead too.

Then the puny two-leg hatchling found him. Were all young two-legs that scrawny? He didn't think so. When the toothpick stood over him, however, he felt fear creeping into his very soul, like a snake curling around its prey. He looked at the little thing standing above him, praying, begging, of all the things, for something, anything to stop the boy from murdering him on the spot. Of all the dragons, he, a shadow-hunter! The majestic night-wings did not beg.

There's a first time for everything, apparently.

He looked deep into the green eyes-

strange, he thought at the moment, I never knew two-legs could have green eyes too.

-hoping he'll change his mind. And for a moment, it looked like he will. But then he lifted his tiny sword-

Oh Fengur, it's going to hurt being killed with that stingy thing.

-and closed those strange two-leg eyes of his. The night fury closed his eyes too, accepting his fate, waiting for the final jolt of pain to come.

It never did. Instead, the bindings tangled around his limbs were loosening. He snapped his eyes wide open, staring at the two-leg releasing him. He couldn't believe it! Was it a gift from the gods? Or was this hatchling trying to beat him in a fair fight? He didn't bother to find those answers. As soon as his legs were free, he pinned the two-leg to the ground, glaring at him, wishing to be able to kill him with his stare.

He doesn't know why he's done it. Perhaps it was pity for the wee thing, perhaps he was just afraid to kill the gift from the gods. Perhaps he was just soft after the shock he's been through. But the two-leg let him go, gave him a second chance, however small, to live. It wasn't fair to kill the skinny being like that, not after it gave him another chance. So he let the two-leg go.

That doesn't mean he's not mad at him, of course. Or that he doesn't regret it.

When he found out his tailfin was gone, he panicked. He tried desperately to get out of the cove, screeching, clawing at the walls, biting at the roots hanging from the edges, taking off again and again, shooting plasma blasts all around in his rampage, not caring where they landed or what it killed. He worn out himself and collapsed onto the ground, falling asleep sooner than his head hit the ground.

He woke up in the evening, hurting even more than before. He couldn't even walk. All he could do was crawl on his belly to the small lake in the middle of the cove, drink up as much water as he could and then wash what remained of his tailfin, hoping to avoid infection. He curled around, licking his tail and fell asleep again, hoping he'll be able to get out the next morning.

Now, rested and remotely fine, he tried again. But there was no use. Without his tailfin, he won't get out.

What an ungracefull way to die, he thought, looking up to the sky. He watched as the wind carried the clouds in the air. Trapped, like a mere beast in a cage, with nothing to eat. Maybe once he's recovered, he'll be able to catch some fish in the lake. But what if there isn't enough to feed him? Perhaps some animals come to the lake to drink. He could hide in the shadows and then pounce.

Still, what kind of life would it be, living the rest of his life alone in the mossy prison?

**THUD**

He froze, pricked up his ears and waited, listening.

**SNAP**

He heard it again, something was coming from the further end of the cove. Realizing it might be his last chance to get a decent meal, the dragon quickly got up and jumped to hide on a nearby rock.

**THUD**

**SHUFFLE**

**SPLASH**

A fish?! How did a fish get-

He silently rolled his eyes in his hiding spot, when the intruder came into his field of view.

Him again? Why did the blasted hatchling come back? He'll scare of all the animals!

Ah, those disgusting humans, always getting in the way. I want a deer, not you, you two-legged wimp!

* * *

><p>"I should probably just start at the beggining."<p>

Nala sat on a stool opposite the village's elder, her hands clasped tightly around a cup of tea. The liquid wasn't hot anymore - she sat there for a while now, long enough for it to cool down. The old woman never said anything, not even gesturing for her to begin talking already. She simply kept smiling at Nala, waiting for when she's ready to start talking. The girl was thankful for that, it really helped her to calm down. Taking one more deep breath, she finally

found the will to speak up.

"My name is-" Nala caught herself mid-sentence, realizing she won't get away with her usual lie, not this time. "My name isn't Nala, but I want others to call me that." She studied the elder's face carefully, but the woman wasn't looking at her anymore. Instead, she looked into the fire with a blank expression on her face. As she continued, Nala gazed into the fire too.

"I come from a small island, you probably never heard of it. It's called the Lettermulan and it's located - I think - North-northwest from Berk." Nala paused to look at the elder again and found her smiling at her in curiosity. So she hasn't heard of the island, Nala thought.

"It's a part of the Owlhead tribe, even though the tribe's main island is a little far away."

"Living there wasn't easy, but then again, is it ever? The problem is, Lettermulan is the closest inhabited island from the Helheim's gate. Raids were, and still probably are, the main people's concern. Everyone on the island was trained to fight sooner or later."

"Not much crops could grow there, because it's located too north and the weather's too cold. The island's too small for hunting deer and other forest animals, it could never feed the whole village. Most of the men were fisherman's. We had a few farmers, but as I said, it wasn't an easy job. It was needed, though. There were also two or three traders, who used to sail to other islands to exchange our products for other goods, mostly crops and livestock. I never saw the point in buying more sheep or yak, the dragons always went after them during the raids, but after a few years, I've realized we were quite capable of fending the dragons off without much loss."

There was a quiet pause and Nala wondered if the woman opposite her is really interested in hearing more about Lettermulan or if she's just pretending her patience and is waiting for Nala to start talking about herself. It looked like the elder was honestly interested in the small island, but Nala wasn't sure.

Truth to be told, the girl talked about the island that was once her home only to calm down and get used to talking about the past. Even though she wasn't giving away information on her past but her home, it was still connected to her and it was making her uneasy. It was nice to finally have someone to talk about it, the elder was really nice and the tea tasted very good, but-

Thinking of which, she needed to get more of it, her cup was empty.

She got up, showed her empty cup to the elder and asked: "Can I have some more?" The old lady nodded, so Nala took the kettle from the round table next to her and poured herself some more tea.

"I am talking in past tense," she said as she was sitting down again, "because I left the island two years ago. I can tell you only that much about the island and I can't guarantee it hasn't changed when I was gone."

The woman studied her face, so Nala quickly looked away, the elder's

gaze was really unnerving now. She had to look her in the eyes, she knew it. Although she didn't want to, it was important Gothi believed what Nala had to say. She locked her eyes with the old lady's calculating gaze and forced herself to calm down.

"A few months before my sixteenth birthday, I was taken from my home. I tried to come back, but when I did, something horrible happened. There was my older brother, and I-" the words stuck in her throat. She bit her lip to hold back the tears threatening to fall down her cheeks. It didn't help much.

Oh boy, how she hated that memory.

"I did something I'll regret for the rest of my life," she said quietly. She had to stop talking now. Whenever she felt like crying, she couldn't talk. If she did, she'd sob and weep and wail and, and-She'd look like a wreck.

That was definitely not an option right now.

The room went quiet, except for the crackling of the fire and Nala's uneven breathing.

"I'll be 17 in a few months," she said when she was sure it was safe to talk again. "I was born two weeks before Snoggletog. My mother, Magnhildra, wanted to make sure I'll be the best wife-to-be of choice in the village, so she spent a lot of time preparing me. She's done an amazing job, without her, I'd be twice as lazy as I am. I never married only because I was taken away before it could happen."

"I know how to knit, mend, weave, cook, bake, and although I don't like it, I can do pretty much any cleaning around the house. I know the basics of treating wounds. With some training, I can help farmers or fishermen. I'm a little out of practice, but I can handle a sword pretty well and I have some experience with a bow too. I have great experience with the use of... ehm, unusual materials. I can make myself helpful."

"My point is, I've been travelling for almost two years. I want to forget and settle down. Berk seems to me like a great place to start a new life. I'd be valuable for the tribe and I promise I don't mean any harm to the people of Berk.

The elder slowly nodded, deep in thought.

What was it supposed to mean? Nala had no idea, she just hoped it was good news.

Will the elder allow her to stay with the tribe? Will she get kicked out? What would she do if that happened? Probably just keep going. She'd pack up, say goodbye to Hiccup, catch a ride in the morning and leave Berk. Hiccup...

She still needed to apologize for how she snapped at him. I'll do it as soon as I get back to his house, Nala decided.

Sitting there, waiting for the elder to decide, she watched the flames dance in the fireplace. She always liked fire. Its warmth often calmed her down when she was scared. As a little girl, she was terrified of losing her mother. Other kids were scared of

thunderstorms, trolls or dragons, but not her.

She used to have a nightmare, it was same every time. In it, she woke up very early in the morning, it was still dark outside. It was quiet, she couldn't hear anything. She got up from her bed and went to her parent's room. On the bed, she could see only her mother's sleeping figure laying on the bed sheets with her back turned to her. The body was exposed, someone kicked the covers off the bed during the night. Nala walked to the bed, but when she touched her mother's arm, the body turned to ashes. Then a gust of wind blew the ashes in her face and she started choking on them.

She usually woke up after that.

She'd always go downstairs to the fireplace. If the fire was still burning, she'd add more fuel. If she had to, she'd start a new fire again. Usually her mother would find her there, sitting at the fire, arms hugging her knees. Magnhilda would sit next to her, take Nala into her lap and tell her everything's okay and that she loves her. They sat like that often, staring into the flames. Sometimes, they would sing together, quietly, so they won't wake up Nala's father and brothers.

A low thud cut off her train of thoughts and she blinked in surprise. She looked up to see the elder hitting her staff against the wooden floor once more, to catch Nala's attention. "Yes?" she asked, trying to sound as calm as possible.

The old woman gestured to the door and nodded. Nala looked between the door and the elder, and stuttered, her voice faltering: "I- you mean, the... I can go now?" The elder nodded again, smiling. Nala cleared her throat, put her cup down on the table beside the kettle, dusted off her pants and stood up.

"So, thank you for the tea," she said, unsure what to say, "I'll go now." She shuffled her feet and hugged her sides with her arms. "Would you mind telling me if I can stay or not?" She hoped it didn't sound as choked as she thought.

The woman smiled knowingly at her, nodded and lifted her point finger threateningly, as if saying: For now, yes. But I'll keep an eye on you.

Nala let out the breath she didn't realize she's been holding and smiled back. "Thank you. I won't cause trouble, I promise." In a more serious tone, she added: "And I promise I won't willingly do anything against the village or people of Berk, and I'll keep the tribe's well being in mind."

* * *

><p>Did you like it? I hope you did!

Again, I beg you all to review, as your support means the world to me and this fic needs reviews to keep going smoothly. It's Christmas! You wouldn't let me down on Christmas, would you?

**I also need to make something clear. Not for you, but for me. Remember the "Hiccup, Astrid, Nala romance" thing? Well, now I'm asking you to vote in your reviews. Tell me what you want to

read!**

You have these options:

1) The good old Hiccstrid

2) The not-so-common Hiccup x OC

3) No romance at all

4) The I-don't-care option

5) A crazy love triangle, Nala the winner at the end

6) A crazy love triangle, Astrid the winner at the end

**7) A crazy love triangle, I-don't-care-who-wins-in-the-end
(basically, you just want the drama and humor that comes with love
triangles)**

How to vote?

**In your review, write this: VOTING - (*insert numbers 1-7 here*) +
tell me if you'd still continue reading this story in case I decided
to go with a different option than you chose.**

**I'm sorry if you think Astrid's a bit too rough or violent in this
story, I didn't mean her to be that way. But think about it, she's
the only one who ever questioned Hiccup's sudden success in dragon
training. Why wouldn't she be suspicious and potentially hostile when
Nala arrived?**

**Also, do you think I should name each chapter, or should I just
keep the numbers?**

Thank you for all the reviews, favs and follows!

See ya,

~MissSharpenedSpikes

End
file.